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WHAT IS AND WHERE IS THE UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE?

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ABSTRACT

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DOCTRINE?

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The international, national and U.S. Armed Forces interoperational contexts have evolved dramatically since World War II, with the end of the Cold War bringing previously unimaginable change. Within this new environment, a well-led military force continues to be a mainstay for supporting national security strategy. The U.S. Air Force has publically embraced and advertised Quality Air Force as its leadership philosophy to achieve mission accomplishment in the challenging circumstances today and for the foreseeable future. Despite the recognized importance of leadership to successful Air Force operations, as frequently stated and documented, the Air Force falls well short of producing and providing effective leadership doctrine. The leadership discussion in our keystone operational doctrine is limited and confusing in relationship to management. And although there is a wealth of leadership information produced by various Air Force agencies, there is no consolidated, comprehensive, contemporary guidance prescribed as Air Force leadership doctrine. The Air Force must correct this shortcoming.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II - APPROACH	4
CHAPTER III - CONTEXT	5
Changes	5
Politically.....	6
Economically.....	6
Militarily	7
Constants	9
Military Force.....	9
Effective Leadership	10
CHAPTER IV - QUALITY AIR FORCE.....	14
How To Lead.....	12
How To Develop Leaders.....	15
CHAPTER V - DOCTRINE.....	20
Operations	20
Leadership	25
CHAPTER VI - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	34

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

In today's tumultuous world an expression often heard is that the only constant is change. That, of course, is not true. A first-order constant, which stands out in the midst of this tumult, is the act of leading. Providing effective leadership is as critical today, and for the foreseeable future, as ever, possibly more so. This is certainly true for the United States Air Force.

In the Air Force, leadership is, simply stated, influencing people. Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 35-49, "Air Force Leadership," and its about-to-be-published successor, AFP 36-2127, define leadership as "the art of influencing and directing people to accomplish the mission."^{1&2} It could reasonably be argued then that leadership includes the visible attitude, physical action, and verbal and written direction provided, and responded to, by all personnel, on a continual basis. It is not surprising that this encompassing and compelling ingredient of mission accomplishment is a recurring topic of conversation, education and evaluation.

A key indication of the significance of leadership in the Air Force is its emphasis at the Service's senior institution of professional military education (PME), the Air War College (AWC). For example, students selected to attend AWC during academic year 1994-1995 were provided course materials prior to their arrival at the school which highlight the fundamental role of leadership. A "Congratulations on your selection..." letter explains that during the first three months, students "study strategy, doctrine, leadership, and air and space power....[which]...provide a foundation for the remainder of

the Air War College curriculum.”³ The importance of leadership is further verified by the AWC in that it is designated as one of seven “enduring themes that link all Air War College courses.” These themes also include strategy, doctrine, air and space power, technology, joint warfighting and political-military integration, an impressive list of core national defense components.⁴ Studying leadership and the other enduring themes at AWC is not, however, just an academic exercise. The purpose is to help prepare senior officers to be more effective leaders in current and future operational, organizational, national and international environments. In other words, to help graduates to “be better equipped to deal with the 'momentous military revolution' on whose verge we now stand,” and to “meet the very dynamic and challenging leadership tasks which lie ahead.”⁵

In and outside the Air Force, leadership is a subject which has undergone tremendous review, analysis and revised application in response to evolving circumstances. To help concerned members stay informed and current on important issues, the Air University Library produces a “Special Bibliography Series” which “provides students, faculty, analysts, and area specialists with comprehensive subject coverage of major topics...addressed in the curricula and research programs of Air University.” Leadership is one of those topics. The most current supplement (number 2) to the special bibliography on “Leadership/Military Leadership” is dated December 1993, and includes those selected references added since the previous update in February 1991. It provides evidence of the extent of literature on leadership published just since the end of the Cold War. After deleting the more narrowly-focused sections, “Evaluation & Assessment,” “Interviews,” “Problems—Sexual Harassment,” “Quotations” and “Women,” the bibliography contains over 245 book and over 200 document references

for those works published since 1990. Limiting the references to the sections, “Leaders” and “Leadership,” and “Managers” and “Management,” (deleting such sections as “Ethics & Values,” “Groups & Teams,” “Motivation” and “Supervision”) leaves over 95 books and over 90 documents.⁶ As a whole, the vast amount of this leadership literature, along with that currently lining the shelves of commercial bookstores, reflects dramatically changed and changing international, national, organizational and interpersonal dynamics. The content reflects the consequential effects on leadership.

The act of leading, based on theory or philosophy of how to lead, has necessarily had to adapt in concert with these changing circumstances. The AWC subscribes to this phenomenon as indicated by offering the advanced thematic study course “Leadership in the 21st Century.” The introduction to the course syllabus makes the case for application in the military, stating “Leadership now and into the 21st Century will require new skills and a new attitude to lead military organizations.”⁷

Leadership—in the Air Force its terminology permeates the vernacular, the subject is emphasized up through the highest levels of PME, the topic is encouraged for review and research and its practical application directly impacts operational and organizational success. Given this emphasis on, and significance of, leadership in the Air Force today and into the next century, it is logical (if not imperative) that the Air Force identify, implement and institutionalize a contemporary leadership philosophy, and that it be effectively represented in, and clearly presented as, Air Force doctrine. So, how has the Service done in this regard?

CHAPTER II - APPROACH

In 1988, Warren G. Bennis, Distinguished Professor of Business Administration at the University of Southern California, completed writing On Becoming a Leader. The richly-praised book presents what Professor Bennis calls “the hows: how people become leaders, how they lead, and how organizations encourage or stifle potential leaders.” Underlying the hows, he goes on to claim, leaders must understand the context they are working in, and notes “The changes in the last generation have been so radical that it seems...not just that the rules changed [but that] it's a different game.”⁸ Coincidentally, also in 1988, Total Quality Management (TQM) began its official implementation in the United States Department of Defense (DoD).⁹ This theory of management and leadership was not only adopted during a time of tremendous change, in the DoD it significantly added to it. The overriding consideration though, was that TQM also provided important, timely leadership hows. The remainder of this paper will use an approximation of the Bennis construct of context and hows to assess current Air Force leadership theory. It will briefly describe the broad context surrounding today's Air Force leadership challenges and adoption of TQM, generally look at Air Force TQM leadership hows with emphasis on its less-publicized leader development mandate, and examine the treatment of leadership in Air Force doctrine.

CHAPTER III - CONTEXT

Changes

Changes in the world since World War (WW) II have been nothing less than phenomenal. Discussion of three traditional concepts of national power vis-à-vis international relations, i.e., political, economic and military, provides a good overview.

Politically

The worldwide geopolitical composition has been dramatically altered. In 1991 international relations and interaction were characterized by President Bush as a “new world order.”¹⁰ However, by 1994 increasing instability throughout the world and the international community's unwillingness or inability to cope with it led Daniel Schoor, Senior News Analyst for National Public Radio, to describe this environment as “The New World Disorder.”¹¹ Kenneth R. Mayer, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, sees it as a “revolutionary change in the international environment.”¹² He then links this new environment with U.S. national security policy. “The collapse of the Soviet threat has changed the context of the defense debate by forcing a reassessment of U.S. policy along lines that have long been settled.” Professor Mayer supports his assertion by quoting congressman Les Aspin, who, as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in early 1992, said “we are cut loose from a lot of our certainties, and we must ask ourselves first-principle questions which haven't been asked in 40 to 50 years.”¹³ Inarguably, what appears as a new world order on the macro level, is one of disturbing chaos or disorder at a more micro level.

Economically

Economically also the U.S. is involved in shifting positions. Immediately following WW II “America was the world's creditor and enjoyed a highly favorable balance of trade....[but] by 1985 the country had an unfavorable balance of trade and had become a debtor nation,” according to Stephen E. Ambrose, Boyd Professor of History and Director of the Eisenhower Center at the University of New Orleans. He notes that “the shift in the world economy and America's position in it” is an important factor in foreign policy struggles, and that although “America was richer than ever...its relative position in the world economy had been sharply reduced.”¹⁴ Henry Kissinger adds that in “the new international system...tendencies [toward equilibrium] will be even more pronounced in economics, where American predominance is already declining, and where it has become safer to challenge the United States.”¹⁵

Meanwhile, the domestic economic agenda unquestionably reflects the post-Cold War reality. The Editor-in-Chief of “Joint Force Quarterly” and the Senior Editor of “Middle East Quarterly” jointly note in an article titled “Assessing U.S. Strategic Priorities,” that “America is increasingly prone to placing economic concerns ahead of defense issues. It is also likely to place concerns over the budget deficit, low levels of national savings, and investment needs ahead of the long-term impact of current reductions in defense expenditures.”¹⁶ General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, affirms this observation, referring to it as a “byproduct of this change in world affairs.” “Because of our new strategic situation, defense budgets are declining along with military resources....Before this century ends, defense budgets will shrink to less than half of their 1988 Cold War apogee.”¹⁷

Militarily

These political and economic changes, along with others, have, and are, substantially modifying the DoD landscape. The most significant modification, organizationally and operationally, is the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. This legislation requires emphasis on joint military coordination and cooperation to help overcome service parochialism, and maximize combined U.S. Armed Forces' efficiency and effectiveness. General Shalikashvili says “The aim of the law was to compel the military to prepare to fight more readily as a joint force, improve interoperability, and prevent tragedies inherent in hasty planning and lack of preparation.”¹⁸ General Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, promotes this requirement in a message to all the men and women in the Air Force. “The American way of war has been fundamentally changed by Goldwater-Nichols and we [members of all services] must work together to defend our nation.”¹⁹

Also modifying the DoD landscape operationally and economically is technology. Technologically, amazing new capabilities have been created which effect innumerable activities in the developed world, and the U.S. military has been a primary beneficiary. In his State of the Union address on January 29, 1991, President Bush praised the contribution of military technology to operations in the Persian Gulf. “The quality of American technology...has enabled us to deal successfully with difficult military conditions and help minimize precious loss of life. We have given our men and women the very best.”²⁰

Certainly the subject of this proclamation applies across a wide spectrum of military operations, not just those highlighted in the Gulf War. Admiral William A.

Owens, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, credits “technological leaps” with bringing about a “revolution in military affairs.”²¹ And Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila E. Widnall, provides a technological bottom-line. “In today's changing climates, the Air Force and the nation still need leading-edge aerospace technology....Technology advances ensure the qualitative edge we need to deter wars when we can and to win wars when we have to fight.”²² Be that as it may, leading-edge technology is expensive, and results in what General Shalikashvili calls a “revolution [which] runs counter to...the steady decline in defense budgets.”²³

Cumulatively, these historical developments have resulted in an environment unique for the military leaders of our country. They grew up with and understood the clear and present danger of the communist “evil empire,” its attendant policy of containment, and how to manage the Armed Forces within this context. The challenge they (and we) face today is daunting. Dr. Kissinger on the international level:

*Never before has a new world order had to be assembled from so many different perceptions, or on so global a scale. Nor has any previous order had to combine the attributes of the historic balance-of-power systems with global democratic opinion and the exploding technology of the contemporary period.*²⁴

General Shalikashvili on the national level:

*[On the threat] We have traded frightening certainty for dangerous uncertainty. [On the reduced budget] A drop of this magnitude will inevitably change how we think about, plan, and build our defenses....[O]ur challenge is to do it differently, to drive our logic to a higher plane of thinking. [Overall] The heart of the challenge is this; as we move into an uncertain future we must get better as we get smaller.*²⁵

Admiral Owens on the joint military level:

*Joint perspective at the upper levels of military leadership has the potential of bringing about change in a new era. It is a fundamental part of our response to the revolution in military affairs that confronts us today....Force structure and budgets get smaller and...operational demands evolve....We must manage the largest decline in military resources since World War II as we maintain the flexibility to meet the demands of vigorous engagement.*²⁶

General Fogleman on the Air Force level:

*Following the coalition's victory in the cold [gulf?] war, the Air Force entered a period of dramatic and rapid change. We drew down our force structure, reengineered our organization, initiated a quality movement, defined a mission and vision statement to guide us....Our challenge now is to build on the strong foundation we've already laid.*²⁷

Unquestionably, many of the paradigms of the old context no longer apply, and arguably, many others require close scrutiny to determine their applicability in today's context.

Constants

Military Force

Within this upheaval, some fundamental concepts remain as current today as they were during WW II. One is that a capable military force is a necessary component for satisfying a nation-state's security interests. Professor Ambrose observes that “a brief summary of [the last] half-century...demonstrates some basic truths:...[one is that] a strong military is essential to implementing an activist foreign policy.”²⁸ The “National Security Strategy of the United States” published by the White House in July 1994, is in clear agreement.

*The post-Cold War era presents a different set of threats to our security. In this new period, enhancing American security requires, first and foremost, developing and maintaining a strong defense capability of forces ready to fight....U.S. military capabilities are critical to the success of our [engagement and enlargement] strategy.*²⁹

Colonel Richard Szafranski, Director of Force Structure Studies at the Air War College, projects the concept further into the future.

*Likelier than not, and in all but the most optimistic views, the United States will have to fight in the future....Even those who advocate information war, cyberwar and psychological warfare quickly warn of the need to protect friendly information, controllers, and psyches by force of arms.*³⁰

Effective Leadership

Another enduring concept, closely associated with the need for a viable military force, is that effective leadership is essential to the success of an organization. Professor Bennis advocates three basic reasons why leaders are important. The first is straightforward and universal, “they are responsible for the effectiveness of organizations.”³¹ In another acclaimed book on leadership, William A. Cohen is much more emphatic. “Leadership has an extraordinary power. It can make the difference between success and failure.”³² In the Air Force, General Fogleman claims “good teamwork requires strong leadership....In fact, we...need leaders at every level of our organization.”³³ And the AWC notes leadership is “a key element in conducting military affairs,”³⁴ and that “There is nothing more important to an organization than its leadership philosophy.”³⁵ Clearly, despite the evolutionary and revolutionary changes within the post-WW II and post-Cold War world, a well-led military continues to be mainstay of serving national interests in both the present and the future.

On the other hand, there has been very little agreement since WW II on an absolute theory of leadership which will best ensure organizational success, military or otherwise. Numerous management and leadership theories have come and gone over the last 50 years. But one, TQM, has roots planted firmly in WW II, and is stronger today

than ever. During the war, the U.S. War Department hired Dr. W. Edwards Deming, a founding father of TQM, to teach statistical process control (SPC) to the U.S. defense industry. (With overwhelming world superiority, and little need for efficiency, after the war most companies stopped using SPC.) In 1947 the Allied occupation forces in Japan recruited Dr. Deming to help prepare for the 1951 Japanese census. And in 1950 the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers asked him to speak on SPC and quality control to Japanese research workers, managers and engineers.³⁶ The rest, as they say, is history. “He ended up teaching much more...his lectures were the genesis of the modern quality philosophy.”³⁷ TQM continued to grow and flourish in Japan, but did not take hold in U.S. industry until the latter half of the 1980s. Ironically it was more than 45 years after being first introduced to the War Department that TQM was officially adopted by the DoD.

Subsequently, within the Air Force, TQM and its derivative of Quality Air Force (QAF) were embraced as the Service's prescription for contemporary, enlightened leadership and for effective mission accomplishment. According to the Air War College, “Faced with unprecedented downsizing, Air Force senior leadership sought a method to maintain, and even improve, the quality of our first class air force. Their answer was to adopt the Quality Air Force approach.”³⁸ Through all the turmoil of the recent past, and facing on-going change in the near future, QAF has emerged as the standard-bearer of leadership to best support the Air Force's requirement for organizational and operational success.

CHAPTER IV - QUALITY AIR FORCE

How To Lead

The Air War College calls QAF “The Air Force's version of this proven leadership and management philosophy [TQM].”³⁹ The Air Force Quality Institute defines QAF as “a leadership commitment and operating style that inspires trust, teamwork and continuous improvement everywhere in the Air Force.”⁴⁰ General Fogleman makes the pertinent distinction. “It is very important that we differentiate between Quality Air Force and Total Quality Management. The essence of that is, as General McPeak says, Quality Air Force is about leadership, it's about empowerment, motivation, trust, and it's about getting the best out of people.”⁴¹ Focusing on this leadership aspect separate from its management aspect (e.g. processes, metrics, measurements, etc.), QAF is advertised, and generally recognized, as an improved approach on how to lead, which is especially beneficial in today's environment. Colonel Donald E. Waddell III, Professor of Leadership Studies at the Air War College, points out the primary QAF update to the traditional military leadership style.

*According to the total quality philosophy, “the challenge of our leaders is to invert the organizational pyramid and change the role of the leader...to a more supportive and empowering one.” Compared to the decidedly autocratic model of the US military in the past, the TQ approach to leadership is just about as follower-oriented as a system can be.*⁴²

This supportive, empowering commitment and style enhances organizational performance during normal operational circumstances, and will continue to help the Air Force become more efficient and effective while working through organizational and

operational turbulence. General John M. Loh, Commander, Air Combat Command, answering the question of why use the quality approach, gives four reasons.

1) [Because of the standard for victory set in the Gulf War]...The American people expect us to win quickly, decisively, with overwhelming advantage, and few casualties. That demands maximum efficiency and effectiveness from all our people.

2) Quality keeps us competitive.....so that our people, who like to compete, can find ways to be more efficient.

3) We are in a severe drawdown. We know we must be extremely efficient with fewer resources....which is critical because of the force drawdown and our reduced operating budget.

4) Quality makes our people feel good about who they are and what they do.

General Loh caps it off simply by saying “Quality is important...because our military readiness benefits from it.”⁴³ Notably, a recurring theme evident in these QAF discussions, is people and empowerment.

Senior leaders throughout the Air Force are singing the praises of people and empowerment, or in a phrase, people power. While addressing the 1994 Quality Air Force Symposium, Secretary Widnall highlighted the importance of Air Force people. “We recognize that our people are our greatest strength.” And as defined by the Air Force, it is leadership that influences these people to achieve the mission. The Secretary also provided the linkage between QAF leadership and people power.

[W]e must develop a culture that enables our people to take advantage of the many varied skills they bring with them as well as those they learn along the way and give our people the job satisfaction and personal rewards that truly make them a part of the institution....Job satisfaction through empowerment...[and removing] barriers to innovation, initiative and independent thought.⁴⁴

In an interview with “Airman” magazine General Fogleman focused on four points, all of which related to people, and one of which was leadership. In his comments on leadership he gave some examples of what “a quality Air Force is all about.”

Anybody can be a leader....Any time you want to step up and step out and make things happen....[There is] an environment in which people can contribute to their maximum potential....[W]e live, breathe and operate in such a way as to give our people the opportunity to reach their full potential....[A] climate in which supervisors, managers, leaders at all levels don't feel threatened by new ideas and new innovations.⁴⁵

Hand-in-glove with empowerment, General Loh adds the concept of ownership. He defines empowerment as “people who know how to do their job well who can be trusted, in a climate where they can come up with ideas for change, innovation, streamlining, etc.” He then ties in ownership.

When you create that working climate and you have those kinds of trained people and supervisors who mentor and coach and facilitate rather than only control and direct, then you can have ownership. Then your people...[are] proud of who they are and what they do....[O]wnership is...a working climate where people feel empowered and...really own the process.

General Loh also emphasizes the critical leadership connection. He says empowerment includes “a set of supervisors, commanders, leaders...who understand, who thrive in that environment, so they can allow the workers...the opportunity to come up with bright ideas and suggest changes and ways to do things better.”⁴⁶

General Ronald W. Yates, Commander of Air Force Material Command, echoes the people power theme. “Total quality leadership is based upon...the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people...and has proven to be a powerful tool for unlocking those extraordinary possibilities in people and organizations.”⁴⁷ With no public argument among senior Air Force leaders, QAF is regarded as the best

leadership approach, that is, how to lead, for the current context. Additionally, it is apparent this personal “how” to lead is also an organizational “how” to encourage potential leaders. But there is also a systemic encouragement.

How To Develop Leaders

Fortunately, QAF inherently serves another leadership how. This is its direction, in fact its mandate, on how to develop better Air Force leaders. Though overshadowed by the emphasis on how to lead, this mandate will help ensure the Air Force has the leaders necessary to produce and maintain an effective fighting force, and sustain the QAF “journey,” in the uncertain environment of the future. In other words, it will satisfy General Fogleman's pronouncement that the Air Force “must...foster strong leadership at all levels...[as one of] the central ingredients to make today's Air Force even better tomorrow.”⁴⁸ Closer examination of QAF substantiates this critical leadership how.

Although the Air War College and the Air Force Quality Institute each define QAF slightly differently, i.e., a leadership commitment and operating style versus a leadership and management philosophy, both agree it is a system. And both emphatically declare, by definition and by reiteration, that leadership is the very foundation of the system. What then does this system consist of? The Quality Institute describes the system and illustrates its companion symbol.⁴⁹

*Quality Air Force is an integrated system of three components built on leadership. Quality focus, the improvement process, and quality in daily operations are the system elements. Quality focus identifies the priority issues, while the improvement process focuses continuous improvement efforts on the priorities you've identified. And finally, quality in daily operations applies QAF concepts to your workcenter.*⁵⁰

The QAF system is symbolized in Figure 1.



Figure 1
Symbol of Quality Air Force

It is clear in the verbal and symbolic descriptions of QAF that leadership is key to operational success. This is because leaders are responsible for determining organizational vision, policies, priorities and strategies, and creating an environment that inspires trust, teamwork and pride. Unquestionably, effective leadership must envelop and guide the QAF system.

However, equally important is the requirement that the system be enthusiastically used to develop and encourage the personal leadership abilities of those in, and those with the potential to be selected for, leadership positions. The 1993 QAF Criteria, which “are the framework for improving overall organization operational performance,” dictate this systemic requirement. “System” criteria make up one of the four QAF criteria categories and comprise “the set of well-defined and well-designed processes for meeting the organization's customer, quality, and performance requirements.” The most heavily

weighted area within these system criteria is “Human Resource Development and Management.” The importance of this area cannot be overstated.

[It] focuses on the effective management and development of the Air Force's most important resources—its people. It looks at the key elements of how each organization's members are developed and empowered to their full potential to achieve the Air Force's quality and operational performance objectives. It also looks at each organization's efforts to build and maintain an environment for trust, teamwork and quality excellence which satisfies the needs of its internal customers—Air Force people.⁵¹

Analysis of this description reveals the QAF leader development mandate. The Air Force's most important resources, its people, are also its customers. The vast majority of these people (if not all) are customers of Air Force leaders who are responsible for developing and empowering, and creating the proper working environment for, the members they serve. And, those same leaders are customers of the institutional Air Force which is responsible for developing and empowering its leaders to their full potential. This is a reciprocal relationship. To achieve its quality and operational objectives, the Air Force must use the QAF system to develop and encourage its leaders for those leaders to embrace QAF practices in satisfying their customers' professional needs. Well-defined, well-designed processes must therefore be in effect and conscientiously, collectively followed to develop the leaders who are critical to implementing and executing QAF. This is an interactive, symbiotic system which benefits the Air Force institutionally and current and future Air Force leaders personally. This overtly symbiotic system concept of QAF is symbolized in Figure 2, with a dashed line replacing the solid line between the leadership envelope and the system elements.



Figure 2
Symbiotic Symbol of Quality Air Force

The significance of this revised symbol is its designation of the system interdependence between effective leaders(hip) and QAF. The concept can be further described using the system elements. In quality focus, the development of effective Air Force leaders is an on-going top-priority issue. In improvement process, the process(es) and key elements used in developing these leaders are continually reviewed and improved. And in quality in daily operations, the measurements and rewards of and for leader effectiveness are continually reviewed, modified and visibly, consistently practiced by leaders at all levels according to QAF principles. The Air Force must recognize, reward and reinforce leadership practices of QAF practitioners despite any occasional organizational failings as judged by traditional (pre-QAF) philosophy. General Fogleman hit on this point when he answered the question, “One of the criticisms of quality is how does leadership at the top allow empowerment to reach those at the bottom?” He said, “You reward those who come forward with ideas and recognize those people who are open and receptive to the new ideas.”⁵²

The bottom-line comes down to whether leaders within the OAF do better and get better because of the system. Air Force-wide implementation and institutionalization of QAF's leadership hows are imperative for long-term improvement of leader and organizational effectiveness. If attention to, and application of, improved leader development does not mature with QAF, and if leaders continue to get rewarded and criticized based on traditional approaches and measurements, they will be stifled and QAF will be in jeopardy. As a minimum, the Air Force must ensure this contemporary leadership theory is closely monitored and nurtured, and clearly represented in Air Force operational and leadership doctrine.

CHAPTER V - DOCTRINE

Operations

Reflecting on the transformed circumstances, that is the current context, which is at the root of today's Armed Forces' challenges, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Joint Forces Quarterly” reminds readers of the essence of doctrine. “One key in dealing with these challenges is doctrine, the foundation of military operations and a conduit for introducing innovative ideas to future warfighters.”⁵³ With the preeminence of leadership in conjunction with the underpinning of doctrine being essential in military operations, I looked to the “Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force,” Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, to verify Service beliefs on operational leadership, and how well they reflect QAF principles. It looked promising.

In the “Foreword,” then-Air Force Chief of Staff General McPeak indicated “The contents of these two volumes are at the heart of the profession of arms for airmen.”⁵⁴ The “Introduction” further indicated “Aerospace doctrine is...the best way to do the job in the Air Force....doctrine can guide our efforts, gauge our success, and illuminate our problems.”⁵⁵ I looked up “leadership” in the “Contents” for Volume I, the “bare bones...quick-reference form” of the manual. There was no entry. I then checked the “Contents” for Volume II which contains “the essays that provide the evidence and supporting rationale for each doctrinal statement” in Volume I.⁵⁶ Nothing there either. It came down to searching throughout the manual.

I searched Volume I looking for references to leadership. There is only one. Chapter 4, Section C, paragraph 4-3.e., “Training Air Force Aerospace Forces” states that

“Painstaking preparation is required to sustain the quality of Air Force leadership in peace and war. All officers should be accountable for the professional development of their subordinates.”⁵⁷ A review of its Volume II associated essay, Essay X, “Training the Air Force: The Four Components,” revealed two additional references. One in the first paragraph states that to prevail in war or provide successful deterrence, the Air Force must have leaders (among other skilled professionals) who can best be developed through training and PME.⁵⁸ The other, in the “Conclusion,” states that one of the three objectives of Air Force professional development is to prepare professionals for future leadership challenges.⁵⁹

An important responsibility of all Air Force members, not just those in leadership positions, is the professional development of their subordinates. Everyone should strive to ensure those they lead become better leaders than they are. This is absolutely consistent with QAF. But the Air Force bible on what we institutionally believe is the best way to do our jobs must go beyond simply recognizing the need to prepare leaders. I decided to scan all 308 pages of Volume II looking for some “meat” to guide our efforts, gauge our success, and illuminate our problems with leadership.

In the introduction, overview, and 25 essays of Volume II, there are only a few scattered references to leadership in addition to those discussed above. These include the requirements for outstanding intellect and ability to sustain physical exertion and suffering,⁶⁰ along with great strength of character, lucidity, and firmness of mind⁶¹ posited by Clausewitz. Negative effects from the lack of strong leadership or lack of confidence in leadership are also briefly mentioned.⁶² There is just one essay with any real leadership emphasis. Essay D, “The Expertise of the Profession of Arms,” supports the Volume I

statement that “Success in war requires mastery of the art of war as well as the science of war.”⁶³ The essay focuses on the employment of force (war), but broadens its application to include effective mission execution in peace. It asserts that leaders must have professional expertise in the science and art of war.

Military science includes consideration of weapon systems, force structures, history, social sciences, and individual and group behavior. Here the human dimension must not be downplayed in relationship to the quantifiable subjects, and “human factors should be considered in organizing and employing forces as well as in selecting and educating leaders.” “Military art concerns what military forces should or should not do and why and how.” Leaders' success in military art “depends on moral courage, objectivity, judgment, initiative, creativity, and professional expertise.” In summary, leaders must know the technical aspects of their mission, e.g., the “characteristics, capabilities, advantages and limitations” of friendly and enemy forces; the human aspects of their mission, e.g., be able to “foster cohesion, discipline, and a sense of unity in the personnel they lead”; and be able to think creatively to evaluate, reevaluate, and adjust as necessary.⁶⁴

In all the essays providing insight for Air Force doctrine, this was the only discussion of leadership with any substance. It took a portion of approximately three pages. In closing out Volume II, the “Glossary” does list four definitions of leadership, with no mention of QAF.⁶⁵ This dearth of “meat” runs counter to the conclusion of the Volume II “Overview” which highlights the importance of leadership, and (falsely) claims its essays help concentrate on leadership development.

*How a military organization can foster the qualities that war demands from its members has been a crucial problem throughout military history....leadership at its best can deal with the intractable problems of war....war is not the business of managers; it is the art of leaders. We have produced such leaders in the past. We can surely continue to do so. That is a task on which the United States Air Force must concentrate in times of peace. The essays that follow address these and other important issues.*⁶⁶

Despite this claim, the overwhelming content of the essays is concerned with the technical aspects of military science and art, i.e., managing and maneuvering aerospace resources, not the human aspects, i.e., motivating or inspiring people (fostering qualities of cohesion, discipline and a sense of unity, creating an environment inspiring trust, teamwork and pride, and encouraging and empowering).

The fact is, when discussing leadership, our operational doctrine generally treats leadership and management interchangeably as evidenced by its focus on the business of managing war not leading warriors. Dr. Richard I. Lester, Educational Advisor to the U.S. Air Force, Air University, Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development, and Executive Editor of Concepts for Air Force Leadership, helps make the point, distinguishing between management/managers and leadership/leaders. Management is “the activity that allocates and utilizes resources to achieve organizational goals,” and managers “employ physical resources of the organization: money, human skills, technology, and raw materials.” Leadership is “influencing people to accomplish the mission,” and leaders “use emotional and spiritual resources: values, commitment, and aspirations.”⁶⁷ Professor Bennis also highlights “enormous and crucial” differences between leaders and managers. The most pertinent to the content of AFM 1-1 being “The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.”⁶⁸

By way of brief comparison with the U.S. Army, whose officers have a much greater responsibility for leading forces as opposed to operating systems, its keystone operational doctrinal manual is more clear and emphatic in discussing leadership. The Army's Field Manual 100-5, "Operations," has leadership references sprinkled throughout, and under its own heading states the following.

The most essential dynamic of combat power is competent and confident...leadership. Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation...all leaders must demonstrate character and ethical standards...They must act with courage and conviction...the moral qualities—sense of duty, courage, loyalty, and discipline, combined with stamina and skill—provide the decisive edge.⁶⁹

The focus of leadership in Army and Air Force operational doctrine reveals a real difference in the described role of leadership between these Services. The Army concentrates on human impact by those who lead on those being led. The Air Force does not.

What limited discussion of leadership there is in the keystone Air Force doctrinal manual concentrates on the operational impact of weapon systems employment (more appropriately considered management) by those in "leadership" positions. If all our manned weapon systems were replaced with unmanned systems which could perform the same tasks via internal programming or remote control, very little of AFM 1-1 concerning leadership, or as a whole, would be effected. Admiral Carlisle A.H. Trost, former Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy, speaks to the inadequacy of this view in today's context.

*The challenge to leadership is especially critical now, in an era...of explosive technological growth...when the marvelous capabilities of the machine will tempt us to overlook the genius of the person....Now for the first time, we are being conditioned to think that data links can transmit reality, that command and control can replace leadership....Such a view is completely wrong....Leadership is not captured technology but inspired flesh and blood.*⁷⁰

The interchangeable Air Force treatment of management and leadership is magnified as a problem in QAF. Dr. Lester points out that “In this new...quality leadership environment...the difference between leadership and management is taking on a new and important meaning....people do not really want to be managed. They want to be led.” He goes on to say that “to do it right, one has to...develop an understanding of what leadership really is,” and that while “The quality movement recognizes the need for skilled managers, [it] suggests we need to focus more sharply on effective leadership qualities.”⁷¹ Unfortunately, AFM 1-1 provides restricted, confusing discussion of leadership which does not help develop an understanding of what it really is. Leadership should have more prominent, precise attention in our operational doctrine. Does it fare any better in Air Force doctrine dedicated to leadership?

Leadership

There is no comprehensive, contemporary, consolidated Air Force leadership doctrine. There is “official” Air Force guidance on leadership in AFP 35-49 and AFP 36-2127. There is also unofficial guidance and information published in The Quality Approach, second edition, produced by the Air Force Quality Institute, and in Air University (AU)-24, Concepts for Air Force Leadership, produced by the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education (CADRE). Together, these publications

provide what could be considered the current composition of Air Force doctrine on leadership. Concepts for Air Force Leadership is the most substantial of the three.

The current edition of AU-24 is dated 1990. However, an early version of the leadership concepts book was published in 1970 by Air University, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. It is titled Concepts of Air Force Leadership, and includes information on five topic areas. These are: 1) introduction to the concepts of Air Force leadership, 2) challenge to the Air Force officer, 3) behavioral science and Air Force leadership, 4) a multidimensional approach to leadership, and 5) styles of leadership. Each area has “introductory material designed to acquaint the reader with some basic concepts, stimulate his thinking, and construct a framework. This...is followed by...selected readings and, where applicable, case studies, role playing exercises, and problem-situation studies.”⁷² The purpose of the book is to “examine leadership as practiced in the Air Force....To the extent that valid and reliable information concerning a discipline helps one to understand and use it more effectively, the leadership concepts presented here will make him a more effective officer.”⁷³ The text has 58 readings and 582 pages of information to help one become a more effective leader.

In 1983 the book evolved to the first edition of Concepts for Air Force Leadership, published by Air University primarily under the guidance of the Air University Leadership and Management Program Advisory Group (LMPAG). It includes text on four topic areas or “dimensions.” These are: 1) professionalism, 2) organization, 3) interpersonal skills, and 4) elements of effective leadership. Similar to its predecessor, it has an introductory overview and then numerous readings or articles for each dimension (67 articles total). The purpose of the book is stated in the “Preface.”

*Compelling and creative leadership is one of the most critical demands of our time. For too long, we have tended to highlight leaders as managers and have downplayed the development of true leaders. This text focuses on leadership, particularly the kind of leadership needed in the military community. Our purpose is to enhance understanding of the leadership process and thereby help develop better leaders.*⁷⁴

The criticality of leadership, of “true leaders,” is emphasized loud and clear. And yet, the preface goes on to state “Our approach...is certainly not prescriptive because leadership is still very much an art...And...it cannot be developed to perfection.”⁷⁵

The current, or second edition, of AU-24 was also developed under the guidance of the LMPAG. Its structure is very similar to the first edition and includes three dimensions. These are: 1) professional, 2) organizational, and 3) interpersonal. There is also a fourth division, a broad, high-level multidimensional overview of leadership titled “Perspectives.” The “Introduction to the Second Edition” provides some interesting insights.

*The preface to the first edition of this book, published in 1983, stated that for too long we had tended to highlight leaders as managers and had downplayed the development of true leaders. The purpose of the first edition was to correct that misplaced focus and to enhance the understanding of the leadership process. The present edition...is the culmination of an ongoing effort to continue and expand the development of leaders and leadership in the Air Force. The goal of this edition is to examine the latest thinking about the art and science of leadership to achieve better understanding of the process and to improve leadership effectiveness.*⁷⁶

The “Preface” states “This text provides a guide for what you should be, know, and do to lead people.” It also reiterates that “our approach is not prescriptive because leadership is still more of an art than a science....And...cannot be developed to perfection, nor applied as a scientific formula.”⁷⁷ The book then presents 83 articles and over 425 pages to promote a better understanding of the process and to improve leadership effectiveness.

Clearly, this series of books from 1970 to 1990 stresses the importance of leadership in the Air Force. They stress the important distinction between leadership and management. And they stress the importance of the latest thinking about leadership, and understanding the process of leadership. They do this with the stated desire to improve leader effectiveness. They present a great number of articles and hundreds of pages of information in an effort to encourage that improvement. Yet they do not “prescribe” because leadership cannot be “perfected” nor applied as a “scientific formula.” Besides mathematics and other hard sciences, what human endeavor can be perfected and applied as a scientific formula? A great deal of what we in the Air Force do cannot realistically be perfected, but we still prescribe what we believe is the best way to do it. We develop doctrine and strive to achieve it or modify it as subsequent experiences dictate. CADRE makes available substantial valuable leadership information in AU-24, but it is not doctrine prescribed by the Air Force. With QAF being today’s leading-edge Service leadership approach, I decided to check The Quality Approach for leadership doctrine.

The Air Force Quality Institute published The Quality Approach as a “hands-on guide to Quality Air Force.” Given the importance of leadership to QAF, it is not surprising the booklet has a complete chapter, Chapter 2, devoted to, and titled, “Leadership.”⁷⁸ It consists of nine 6” by 9” pages of text. The chapter includes explanations of the Air Force mission and vision. It includes explanations of the USAF and QAF core values: integrity, courage, competence, tenacity, service and patriotism. It includes explanations of the QAF principles to support the values: leadership involvement, dedication to mission, respect for the individual, decentralized organizations, empowerment and management by fact. And it includes explanations of

the QAF operating style: creating the working environment, delegating responsibility and authority, setting goals, measuring progress and rewarding performance, giving everyone a stake in the outcome and striving for continuous improvement. It includes all this in six pages. The remaining three pages discuss the role of senior leaders, mid-level leaders and individuals in QAF. The information is current, pertinent and brief. In fact, the quantity of information in Chapter 2 is roughly equivalent to that on two pages of AFM 1-1, Volume I, with no supporting Volume II essays. That leaves the Air Force pamphlets on leadership to provide prescriptive guidance and “meat.”

Air Force Pamphlet 35-49 is dated 1 September 1985. In the foreword, then-Chief of Staff, General Charles A. Gabriel, strikes a familiar chord. “The Air Force's real strength is its people....Those...in leadership positions have a special responsibility to develop and support the high quality people who will lead the Air Force in the 21st century.” He finished by saying “This pamphlet will help us meet this responsibility.”⁷⁹ AFP 35-49 is approximately 4” by 5”, and has 24 pages of text. It claims to be “a basic guide for the new and for the aspiring Air Force leader....also...a useful review for those...in leadership positions.” It is. It provides a very basic primer on leadership fundamentals, including descriptions of the Air Force leadership concept, traits, principles, situation and preparation. The guidance is accurate and general. It can be fairly characterized as an overview for an entry-level college course, “Leadership Fundamentals 101.” However, it would need extensive embellishment to fulfill General Gabriel's assertion that it will help develop and support the high quality people who will lead the Air Force next century. And as we now know, tremendous unforeseen transitions have occurred in the world since 1985, modifying many previously held

beliefs. Leadership within the QAF is an example. Although generic leadership fundamentals listed in AFP 35-49 have not changed conceptually, the practical application of these fundamentals must adapt to today's circumstances. The Air Force has updated AFP 35-49 as AFP 36-2127 to account for QAF.

Air Force Pamphlet 36-2127, also titled “Air Force Leadership,” is the “in-final-coordination” replacement for AFP 35-49. This coordination copy is dated 17 January 1995. It too is a “guide for developing and improving Air Force leadership.” It also claims to explain “the critical relationship between leadership and Quality Air Force.”⁸⁰ AFP 36-2127 is 8.5” by 11” and has seven pages of text. Basically, it slightly rearranges and restates the contents of AFP 35-49, adding some QAF terminology. For example, the traits listed in 35-49 are, for the most part, renamed or reworked and discussed as the Air Force core values. And the claim to explain the critical relationship between leadership and QAF is satisfied only at the surface level. The explanation consists of a single paragraph with the following observations.

- 1) Leadership and QAF are inseparably linked.
- 2) Leadership is the foundation for the QAF system because quality is leadership driven.
- 3) QAF requires positive leadership actions.
- 4) QAF is a leadership commitment and operating style that promotes trust, teamwork and continuous improvement.
- 5) The leader is directly and actively involved in establishing an environment that encourages effectiveness, innovation, pride in work, and continuous improvement.

- 6) The leader asserts the organizational vision and communicates quality policies and goals to make the vision a reality.

These observations are all correct and generally informative, but of little value beyond that.

Like its predecessor, AFP 36-2127 is simply a very broad overview and explanation of leadership concepts and terms, with some QAF updates. How could it be otherwise at a length of seven pages? It is though, the closest thing to official leadership doctrine the Air Force provides.

Again by way of comparison with the U.S. Army, that Service has five manuals dedicated to leadership doctrine. “Each manual addresses specific leadership needs, supports our operations doctrine, and contributes to our Army's ability to fight or deter aggression.”⁸¹ Field Manual 22-100, “Military Leadership,” is the Army's basic manual on leadership, and the relative equivalent to the “Air Force Leadership” pamphlet. This document has two purposes.

*To provide an overview of Army leadership doctrine, including the principles for applying leadership theory at all organizational levels to meet organizational requirements; and to prescribe the leadership necessary to be effective in peace and war.*⁸²

Although the manual applies to all leaders in the Army, it is targeted at the junior leaders. The point is to incorporate “the professional military values, the bedrock of our service, that all Army leaders must internalize in the earliest years of their careers.”⁸³

This is an important distinction between the Army and the Air Force. Whereas the Army stresses early internalization of leadership, the Air Force stresses early functional and technical specialization and proficiency. Leadership doctrine therefore has diminished practical application and importance to early Air Force career progression.

Key differences between the Air Force pamphlet(s) and FM 22-100, which has over 80 8.5” by 11” pages of text, can easily be seen through the structure of the manual alone.

This manual presents a direct leadership framework that complements our operations doctrine....Part One...discusses doctrinal factors and principles of leadership...Part Two...discusses leadership in action. It tells what a leader must BE, KNOW, and DO by relating the concepts to past conflicts and then discusses the payoff of applying sound leadership. Part Three discusses special considerations of leadership in battle.⁸⁴

This comparison reemphasizes that Air Force leadership “doctrine” as presented in the “Air Force Leadership “ pamphlets (current and proposed), the QAF guide and the CADRE compilation of articles is inadequate. Although the information presented in the pamphlet(s) and guide is viable, and shares a factors and principles approach with FM 22-100, it is too limited and superficial in context. These Air Force beliefs on leadership need to be expanded and brought alive with real-world cause and effect examples and explanations. And although the CADRE articles are comprehensive and relatively current, and share a “be, know, do” approach with FM 22-100, the book declines to take a prescriptive stance due to a concern about not achieving perfection.

Leadership will always be an evolving art, but that should not prevent the Air Force from prescribing what it currently believes about the “best” way(s) to lead. After becoming Chief of Staff, General Fogleman was quick to prescribe and describe four “pass-fail items for leadership.”

- 1) Don't rule through fear.
- 2) Never lose your temper or have an outburst of anger in public.

3) Never tolerate any breach of integrity.

4) [Have] zero tolerance for sexual harassment or any kind of prejudice based on race, religion, ethnic origin, age—any kind of discriminator.⁸⁵

Although these rules are presented from a negative aspect, i.e., don't do something, they clearly have a broad, discretionary positive aspect in satisfying their intent. Notably, the Chief strikes to the heart of the issue when he also said "We want to encourage and grow effective leadership because that's what a quality Air Force is about."⁸⁶

Air University and other Air Force organizations produce voluminous information on good leadership. The Service should be willing to stand behind current, valid guidance and publish it as leadership doctrine. Additionally, unlike the Army, the Air Force has little, if any, complementary relationship between its leadership and operational doctrine. In fact, as discussed earlier, Air Force operational doctrine is confusing in its treatment of leadership. The bottom-line is that the best leadership doctrine in the Air Force, the soon-to-be-published AFP 36-2127, is hardly more than a basic cookbook with sketchy ingredients, directions and pictures. General John G. Lorber, Commander of Pacific Air Forces, has stated that a series of fatal aircraft accidents in 1994 was "symptomatic of flawed leadership." He went on to say "There is something we are doing wrong that needs to be corrected; we need to put the brakes on it."⁸⁷ One of the fundamental things we are doing wrong is being tentative and compromising on providing leadership doctrine.

CHAPTER VI - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The pace of change has been unprecedented over the past 50 years. Yet, while the world has evolved significantly, some concepts remain constant. Two unequivocal examples are that the military remains an essential tool for the conduct of national policy, and effective leadership remains essential for organizational success. On the other hand, numerous management and leadership theories have gained and lost favor during this period. This has led to the implementation of TQM and QAF by DoD and the Air Force in answer to the necessity for effective leadership and organizational and operational excellence in today's challenging context. Fortunately, while QAF trumpets an improved leadership philosophy and operating style (how to lead) for today, it also provides the framework and systemic mandate (how) to develop better Air Force leaders for today and the future. Implementation of OAF seems to be well underway and strongly supported by senior Air Force leaders. However, it is much too early to claim success, and close monitoring and nurturing of QAF practices throughout the Air Force are necessary to ensure it becomes institutionalized. Unfortunately, Air Force doctrine has not kept pace regarding leadership and QAF.

Operational leadership doctrine in AFM 1-1 is unreasonably restricted. It is also confusing in relationship to management, in spite of the existence and intent of AU-24, first published in 1983 and again in 1990. Leadership discussions in AFM 1-1 must be clarified and expanded, and incorporate QAF principles where applicable. Air Force leadership doctrine fares little better. Despite the tremendous volume of information on leadership produced since 1990, and the implementation of QAF as a contemporary

leadership philosophy, the soon-to-be-published Air Force document on leadership doctrine is all of seven pages of text—seven pages. This and other Service publications over the last 25 years, spotlight the importance of leadership and improving leaders. Yet today, in the midst of hundreds of new books and documents on leadership, the Air Force provides its personnel a seven-page pamphlet.

The Air Force, through CADRE, the LMPAG, or a PME student project, should develop a comprehensive, consolidated, contemporary leadership doctrine. This doctrine should include time-tested traditional principles and current QAF philosophy. It should include peacetime, war and operations other than war applications. It should incorporate all pertinent leadership information and describe contextual relevance. And it should be clearly linked to, and reflected in operational doctrine. The Army manuals on leadership doctrine provide a reasonable framework. Continuing to tiptoe around the responsibility to publish hard-hitting leadership doctrine and getting it internalized in the Service's future leaders, is, to use General Lorber's words, “something we are doing wrong that needs to be corrected.” We need to develop, publish, distribute, teach and practice leadership doctrine.

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- ⁸⁰ DAF, AFP 36-2127, p. 1.

⁸¹ *HQ Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-100, "Military Leadership."* Washington, D.C.: 31 July 1990, p. ix.

⁸² *FM 22-100*, p. i.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *FM 22-100*, p. ix.

⁸⁵ Chumley, "We're...", pp. 6 & 7.

⁸⁶ Steven Watkins, "Hoping for needed healing." In "Air Force Times," January 2, 1995, p. 16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*